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THE ESTHETIC FUNCTION OF LANGUAGE

THE main problem of this paper can be stated as a paradox:

(1) If the "esthetic object" is purely sensuous, language can not be an esthetic object, because language is not purely sensuous.

(2) And the esthetic object *is* purely sensuous; for a non-sensuous object can not be directly perceived and enjoyed; and what is not directly perceived and enjoyed is not esthetic.

(3) But language is, or can be, an esthetic object.

Anyone who opens a textbook of esthetics must soon become aware that poetry and prose literature are somehow not taken in by the description given there of the esthetic state of mind. For esthetic experience is characterized as "perception for its own sake" or as the "self-motivated and self-gratifying exercise of perception"; while language is, as Santayana says, a "symbol for intelligence rather than a stimulus to sense"; and as a symbol for intelligence language is an instrument for dealing with things other than the symbols themselves, with a world vastly transcending the scope of immediate attention. Yet poetry, drama, and fiction are fine arts, therefore esthetic objects, *par excellence*.

There are three ways of dealing with this predicament. You can deny my third proposition, that language is an esthetic object, saying, as D. W. Prall was in one vein inclined to say, that "the various arts differ very greatly as to the proportion of their value that is strictly esthetic, music being almost purely esthetic in essence, poetry very slightly so." Now nobody doubts that language has many extra-esthetic and anti-esthetic functions. But to limit the esthetic side of poetry to its phonetic surface, as Prall did, is to leave the great body of poetic values isolated, classified neither with theoretical and practical nor with esthetic values; it is to preclude the development of a unified theory of the fine arts. And, of course, it by no means spares us the necessity of giving some account of the class of values which have been thus set apart.

In the second place, you could deny my second proposition, that the esthetic object is purely sensuous, maintaining with

Greene, Urban, Morris, and Langer that esthetic experience is a department of cognition and that the esthetic object is some sort of sign, containing a reference to something beyond itself. Now it seems as if we could show that this alternative is empirically false, false to the facts about the kind of attitude which is assumed by lovers of nature and devotees of the abstract arts, who certainly seem to be absorbed in what is given to their senses. But more significant is the fact that this approach invariably winds up by reinstating the original issue: If the esthetic object is a special kind of symbol or sign, what kind of symbol or sign is it? What is its referent and how shall we tell whether the reference to this referent is correct or incorrect? The answer, so far as we can understand it, always comes down to some such formula as that the esthetic object is the kind of sign which does not signify anything or the kind of symbol which symbolizes itself—a long way round to immediate experience. Notions like that of the "presentational symbol" and of the "form which asserts nothing yet conveys a truth" *look* like contradictions in terms and in my opinion *are* such. These devices bear witness to the simplicity and fruitfulness of the orthodox approach which assumes it to be the hallmark of the esthetic experience that sensory phenomena are therein divested of their sign functions.

As a third alternative you can show that language can be intelligible without indicating or referring to anything; and if you can show this, you can again deny that the esthetic object is purely or exclusively sensuous without denying that it is directly perceived and enjoyed. As rough names for the two processes that I wish to distinguish here, I will use the terms "meaning" and "reference." Our question, then, has to do with the existence and nature of non-referential meaning.

The existence of such a process is hardly open to doubt. To begin at the level of the natural sign, I would call your attention to Winslow Homer's painting, *The Gulf Stream,* in the Metropolitan Museum. (For the present purpose it will do as well as a good picture would.) In this picture we see a man lying in an open boat at sea, surrounded by sharks; while in the distance there is the shape of a waterspout which indicates an approaching hurricane. In another paper [1] I made the point that our use of the terms "man," "boat," "shark," and so on, to describe the forms in the picture, does not of itself show that we attach any meanings to these forms. But it is clear that the dramatic element in this

[1] "Perception, Meaning, and the Subject-matter of Art," this JOURNAL, Vol. XLI (1944), pp. 561–575.

picture, depending as it does on the quasi-anticipation of a "future" event, is not given to the sense of sight and can be apprehended only through some process of interpretation on the part of the observer. Yet the observer does not treat the forms in the picture as genuine signs; that is, he does not seriously believe in the reality of man, boat, sharks, water, or storm; does not *raise the question* of their reality; and does not respond emotionally as he would if he did. Hence these forms have a function which is somewhere between sensory stimulation on the one hand and reference or indication on the other; and our own state of mind is somewhere between pure esthesis and cognition. A person afflicted with a kind of sensory aphasia and a person deluded into belief would each miss the sense and the value of the picture.

At the more advanced level of language or symbolic function, the point is illustrated by the art of fiction, where sentences seem to withdraw their claims to truth. Suppose we read this sentence in a novel: "On the first of March, 1820, a man stood for three hours at the portal of the Cathedral of Notre Dame." This sentence is more than ink or wind. It conveys ideas. It introduces us to a "world" full of "people" and "events." Yet it does not inform us (or misinform us) about anything in the actual world outside of the novel. The same sentence could, however, be treated as an assertion and be tested for its historical accuracy. Hence the property, informativeness or non-informativeness, is not inherent in the sentence: it depends on the attitude of the reader. The ability of language to divest itself of its reference to reality without losing its intelligibility is thus a specialized function which can be assumed or discarded.

Now imagine that in place of this sentence we have a general observation on the part either of the author or of one of his characters—for example, the first sentence of *Anna Karenina:* "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Needless to say, there are important differences between this statement and the particular statement quoted above. But there is no such difference as might lead us to say that though the first can be taken as fiction, without consideration of truth, the second never can or should be taken so. If any sentence can be comprehended without being credited or rejected, so can any other sentence down to the farthest theorem of physics or economics. There is a perfect continuity, from this standpoint, between the narrative and the speculative portions of a book like *War and Peace*—though the chapters in which Tolstoy writes as a philosopher do naturally provoke the reader to an exercise of thought. Another step and we see that structures like *The Origin of Species,*

The Critique of Pure Reason, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, can be treated as figments of imagination, describing so many possible worlds, less pictorial than Lilliput or Erewhon but not less intelligible; though it is not to be expected that works which were not shaped primarily by artistic motives should prove to be very rewarding when taken purely as works of art. Bacon characterized the philosophies of his own time as "so many stage plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion." Our own point is somewhat different. *Any* philosophy, and any system of science, is a "stage play" in so far as we endeavor to understand it without caring to check up on it. The contemplative attitude embraces meanings which can be carried to any degree of depth whatsoever. The real world, displayed to us by science, figures as one spectacle among many. And when Thomas Hardy writes, "Art is concerned with seemings only," and holds it to be "the mission of art to record impressions, not convictions," we must understand that convictions *become* impressions when the sentences which record them are taken in a certain way.

So far I have been concerned only to establish the fact from which our paradox emerges: the fact that we are able to hold before our direct attention theories, systems, cities, worlds—structures so complexly elaborated in depth that sense-perception could not possibly comprehend them.

It is interesting to notice that this phenomenon could not have presented any problem for a psychology such as Hume's. A psychology of sensations interprets the phenomena of meaning in terms of the accrual of associated images to a sensory core. But that an image should become an object of direct contemplation is as easy to understand as that a sensory datum should be one: the esthetic attitude is, in fact, indifferent to the distinction between imagination and sensation. The free play of fancy in accordance with laws of association was the one thing Hume could regard as simply obvious. He was confronted with the inverse problem to our own: how to go forward to a description of cognitive processes rather than how to get back from cognition to pure ideation. What is the difference between *imagining* and *believing,* e.g., that I live in London? What is the difference between recollection and prediction? What is *added* to a notion when it becomes a reference? When does a word name an object and when does it merely remind us of one? These were the difficult questions for Hume as a psychologist; and it is the inability of his method to cope with these questions that has brought it into disrepute. It is generally believed today that there are reasons for which Hume's method in

psychology must be rejected; that an introspective psychology can not give an adequate account of mental processes. It can not, for example, adequately analyze the features of generality and particularity, precision and vagueness, in meanings or in references. The differences in meaning among such terms as "a mile," "a mile and a quarter," "a million miles," "a very great distance" can not be brought down to differences among mental images. On the other hand, it is considered that a dynamic psychology of cognition can attack such questions with greater success. But an apparent result of this shift in psychological approach is the following. The fact that a waterspout stands for a storm is to be understood in terms of expectancies, preparatory sets, the assumption in response to the waterspout of an attitude appropriate to a storm. The fact that the word "man" stands for men and the word "shark" for sharks is to be understood in terms of ostensive procedures or verificatory procedures. Every such index or criterion of meaning carries with it the idea of a discursus—a displacement of attention from the given object to an object not yet given. The analysis of meaning in the hands of philosophers, subordinating this topic as it does to the interests of theory of knowledge, reinforces this conception. To understand a sentence is to know on what conditions you would accept it as true; but to know this is to know where to go and what to look for—it is to rehearse a line of experimentation. The possibility of an eventual, conditional, and ulterior course of action becomes the criterion of intelligibility. At this point it becomes difficult to see how it should be possible merely to enjoy the content of an idea. If the understanding of language is nothing but the implicit commitment to a procedure of ostentation or of verification, then the values of language must lie in the results of that procedure. They would be such as clarity, precision, and truth (or their opposites); they could not be such as splendor, eloquence, poignancy, or wit. These values are inherent in the immediate grasp of meaning. They are subject to a critical check on a second or third reading; but they neither require nor depend on any process which goes beyond that.

Thus, while the statement, in general terms, of the fact that we can contemplate an object which is not presented but only symbolized, designated, thought of, is perhaps already paradoxical, it becomes flagrantly so on a behavioristic, or "operational," analysis of symbolization, language, or thought. For this reason I would like to make it clear, if I can, that the immanent or non-referential function of meaning in esthetic experience can be recognized and treated operationally. This will require several preliminary points.

(1) The word "contemplation" is imaginatively associated with

sitting and with looking or listening; and it also seems to imply the existence of a contemplated object. An illiterate person, perceiving a man seated for several hours with a novel, could understand his preoccupation if he assumed either that there were interesting shapes inscribed on the pages or that there were shapes which evoked interesting mental images. But, with these two assumptions barred, what could he make of the information, "I am really absorbed in the life of a man named David Copperfield"? It would seem to him that there was nothing which *was* the "life of David Copperfield" to be absorbed *in*. Yet such a person would, after all, be equally mystified if he were told, "I am studying the life of Charles Dickens," or, "I am calculating the life-expectancy of the present generation"; until perhaps it was pointed out to him that he was himself apparently engaged only in listening to spoken sounds yet was in some sense dealing with the question of other people's reading habits. The question "How can language be an esthetic object?" is partly rooted in a psychological confusion, in the fact that we take staring as a model for all contemplation and continue to feel that contemplation *ought* to be pictorial when we no longer suppose that to be the case with other kinds of thought. If there exists a genuine difficulty in the fact that I can contemplate David Copperfield though there be no David Copperfield and no image or picture of him, the difficulty is not peculiar to the present topic. It holds equally for the question of false assertions, which refer to something though there is nothing to which they refer. And if one presumes to settle it by invoking ideal entities to serve as the designata of our thoughts, that will still not take us a single step towards distinguishing between contemplation and reference. That distinction is psychological; it marks a difference between two kinds of response to symbols.

(2) In the second place, we should take note of difficulties and limitations which mark the current behavioristic theories of interpretation. For one thing, it is difficult to identify the operational index to a given act of interpretation. When we say that a waterspout means "storm" to certain people, we judge this equally by people who are running away, people who are organizing rescue parties, people who are sending messages in the weather bureau, and by an indefinite variety of other actions. The psychologist's conception of this interpretative act is a construction from such facts as that you run away *if* you fear storms—with a good many other if's. The reference can not be identified with this act or with any finite set of such acts. A given reference is a characteristic

component of a set of adjustive reactions. It is identified as a parallel change in direction of thousands of variously motivated and qualified types of response; and just what class of changes shall be regarded as a sufficient basis for imputing the reference is not an easy thing to formulate, even in the animal laboratory. This point has been emphasized by many writers.[2] Again, many references are put in evidence at most by implicit responses which would not serve us, in the present state of knowledge, to distinguish them from other references. Thus, you could not tell from the most refined description of the state of my muscles and glands as I approach the breakfast table whether I expect to have tea or coffee. Again, there is the point demonstrated by Tolman and other experimentalists: that the preparatory responses, for example, to a shock are not identical with those elicited by the shock itself. This exposes ambiguity in attempts to characterize sign-interpretation in terms of the display of responses "appropriate" to the signified objects. And such attempts meet a further and very formidable obstacle in the fact that we are capable of interpreting altogether unique and novel combinations of signs and of symbols, which refer to objects never encountered as direct stimuli in our past experience.

Now I believe that most of the objections you will have to the following account of non-referential meaning will be objections that apply to the operational approach to interpretation in general and not to the attempt to clarify operationally the peculiar function of meaning in esthetic experience.

Let us assume that the consummatory phases of behavior, in which terminal values are realized, can be accurately described; and that contemplative activity is a form of consummatory response. Let us assume, in other words, that we understand the nature of *sensuous* contemplation. The feeling-responses which are obtained when one adopts the contemplative attitude, though they may appear just alike to the naked eye, are highly variable. To put it crudely, there are subtle differences in heart-beat, respiration, circulation, etc., which correspond to the differences among the contemplated objects; and the subjective counterpart of this fact is the enormous wealth and range of esthetic feelings. Now if we suppose that the consummatory feeling-response is modified by associative connections established in the course of past experience and reactivated by the present stimulus, we can go on to say that the operational index of the fact that a certain shape in a painting by Winslow Homer has the meaning "storm" is the occurrence of a feeling-response appropriate to the contemplation

[2] See C. L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language*, p. 64.

of a storm. Potentially, there are millions of meanings attached to the surface of *The Gulf Stream*. The water can be resolved into oxygen and hydrogen; the boat can be burned; the man has perhaps a wife and children whom his death would afflict. In principle, any and all of these meanings can be taken into the experience without destroying its esthetic character; but whether a given meaning is artistically and critically *relevant* depends on the increment of positive value that it can contribute; and whether a given meaning is *in point of fact* active in somebody's experience is to be known by the particular feeling that he has and shows or expresses. Relevant feeling-response, plus the admittedly fragmentary and eccentric flow of imagery, is also what gives the rich life to the otherwise barren act of following a page of print.

As an essential precaution here, it should be added that there is no reason *a priori* why we should be able to say what the full meaning of a work of art is; for that would be either to describe the meaning it has for an observer, which presupposes an elaborate psychological theory that we do not possess, or to say something which has exactly the same meaning, that is, the same influence on feeling, as the work of art—and this, for various reasons, may well be impossible. One measure of mediocrity in Homer's *Gulf Stream* is the degree to which we can juggle its forms about on the canvas without destroying its value; and another measure is the fact that an expression like "a lonely Negro in an open boat at sea, in the path of a hurricane" conveys a feeling not *much* different from the feeling conveyed by the picture.

Esthetic feeling as an index of meaning is like any other index: it is nothing but a modification of behavior induced by previous learning. The difference between what I have called meaning and what I have called reference corresponds to the difference between the *kinds* of behavior which are thus affected. The existence of a meaning attached to an esthetic object is to be recognized by a change in the quality of the *contemplative* feeling-response. The taste of an orange can bear out a prediction, or fail to bear it out; it can satisfy an appetite or disappoint it. But to say that the taste of an orange can itself be borne out or satisfied is surely to make no sense whatever, even if the taste in question happens to be an acquired one. In quite a parallel sense: the shapes in *The Gulf Stream* are sufficient to suggest the idea of a rising storm; and once suggested, the idea is present as a possession to be enjoyed. To ask, then, whether the idea is correct, whether it is confirmed by the sequel or agrees with an archetype, is meaningless and irrelevant, because it ignores the nature of the act which we take as the index of the idea.

At the root of the whole difficulty is the persistence of the ancient dichotomy, contemplation *versus* action. Once convinced that learning is to be understood as the redirection of behavior, we naturally turn to theoretical and practical responses as models of learned behavior, simply because of the practical facility of discriminating responses when they are brought out into the open field; and mental processes seem to be clearly differentiated when we trace their implications for action and chart the courses or tendencies which they would follow if completely carried out. The esthetic attitude is by comparison apparently impassive, immobile, static—a sort of dark night for behaviorists where anything that happens looks like anything else. For this reason I have emphasized both the practical difficulty of discriminating "references" and the theoretical possibility of discriminating "meanings." But some very eminent writers have taken a different tack. When their attention is called to the esthetic attitude, they observe its resemblance to a case of deferred response and accordingly interpret it, not as a full-fledged action of its own kind, but as an abortive action of some other kind. Thus, a picture like *The Gulf Stream* induces us by some of its features to assume that we are dealing with a dangerous situation; but the frame of the picture, the walls of the gallery, and other circumstances cut off this inference, leaving us like some of the stupider animals in the laboratory to display a reaction which is no longer appropriate. The esthetic emotion is a sort of abridged version of the alarm we should feel if we were present at the scene itself; and the significance of the picture lies, so to speak, in this false reference. It is impossible to mention all the valid objections to this type of theory as it applies itself to the arts: one is that we do not see how an emotion like alarm, merely by growing smaller, should become positive and pleasurable when it was negative and painful. But it is rather important to see the reason for the existence of such a theory. It is the assumption of the primacy of theory and practice based on the fact that esthetic contemplation, as traditionally conceived, provides no foothold for the study of meanings, which do nevertheless sometimes function in that experience. It is, if I may say so, not the *fault* of the esthetic attitude that it has its whole field before it and therefore can not and need not go outside. It is nature's fault, or perhaps even the fault of logic; for in the last analysis when we say that esthetic experience contains meanings but no references, we are saying something which is analytically true.[3]

[3] Mr. Lucius Garvin, propounding the same question that I deal with in this paper ("The Paradox of Aesthetic Meaning," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. VIII, 1947, pp. 99–106), also offers what is apparently

Let us now consider a simple empirical statement. I choose Nietzsche's remark about the relatives of a suicide: "The relatives of a suicide take it in ill part that the deceased was not more considerate of their feelings and their reputations." Some of the normal reactions to a sentence like this would be the following: you can accept it; accept it "in part"; doubt it; reject it; or hold it before your mind as a hypothesis for further examination. In every case except perhaps the last it is clear that the *understanding* of the sentence must be distinct from the act in question, if only because it is also presupposed by the other acts: to accept, reject, or doubt a sentence you must first understand it. It is also clear that the act, for instance, of *accepting* the sentence expresses this fact about the person who performs it: that his response system is geared to one order of things or events in the environment rather than another; in other words, he has an expectation about the behavior of the relatives of suicides. He has also feelings which are conditional upon the expectation: one might feel despondent if one has to accept Nietzsche's proposition and relieved if one is able to reject it.

The case in which we "entertain" the sentence as a mere "supposition" would seem to be different; and it is this frame of mind

the same solution. "The solution proposed is as follows: What an art work means, aesthetically, is simply the feeling-response obtained from it in aesthetic contemplation." But this statement is, in my opinion, unsatisfactory.

i. It implies that *every* art work has a meaning and thereby either denies the possibility of a response limited to sensuous quality and formal order or confers on that type of response the gratuitous designation of "meaning." Even if we adopted a sense of the word "meaning" so general as to make Garvin's statement acceptable, we should still be faced with the characteristic differences between decorative design and formal construction on the one hand and poetry and expressive prose on the other; and it is on the resemblance and difference between these kinds of esthetic object that the "paradox of esthetic meaning" rests.

ii. It obliges us to say that a piece of music *signifies* the feeling which (as one would usually say) it produces. This is as if Pavlov had said that his unconditioned stimulus, e.g., food, signified salivation to the dog to whom it was given.

iii. It would compel us to say that the meaning of the forms on the canvas of *The Gulf Stream* was "apprehension," "tension," "excitement," rather than "storm," "danger," "possible catastrophe"; or that Pavlov's conditioned stimulus (the bell) meant "salivation" rather than "food" to the dog.

Feeling-response is not the meaning of a work of art. *Alteration* of feeling-response, in ways which remain to be specified by a theory of learning, is the tangible evidence (the only evidence, other than linguistic paraphrase, available to the student of esthetic experience) that a person is thinking of something more than what he perceives; or, in other words, that certain forms are endowed for him with certain meanings.

that we are apt to identify with the understanding of the sentence, as opposed to the various degrees and kinds of assertion. Yet it is in the nature of a supposition, after all, that it is something *to be* tested. It expresses a verificatory set, a group of implicit exploratory responses which look ahead to an eventual result—though a result which is not prejudged. One is, so to speak, prepared for this *or* that in the relatives of a suicide—the presence or the absence of a certain trait. And this attitude corresponds, on the psychological side, to a definition of the meaning of the sentence as the set of testable consequences that can be deduced from it. Considered as a supposition, Nietzsche's sentence would certainly be clearer if it were modified to indicate whether we are to look *only* for resentment in the relatives of a suicide or for a mixed attitude of resentment and grief; and, again, whether it means to say that they are resentful *if* they think of their own reputations or that they *do* think of their own reputations and *are* resentful; just as, considered as an assertion, it would have a better chance of proving true if it were modified by the word "frequently" or "sometimes." But any of these changes would spoil the quality of the sentence as a piece of writing. That quality is poignant, ironical, and shocking. It can be exhibited, though not duplicated, by a paraphrase: "The dead man himself, among all those affected by his deed, was presumably the most unfortunate; we might suppose, then, that his family would be overwhelmed by pity and grief; but *on the contrary* they are resentful, for they are thinking more of themselves than of him." Here the element of contrast, incongruity, which is without interest for the psychology of suicides or their relatives, is made plain. This element would be weakened and reduced by exactly those changes which would increase the theoretical value of Nietzsche's sentence. On the other hand, it would exist in that sentence if there were not a single case for which the sentence held good. It would exist in a note jotted down, perhaps, as the sketch for a play: "The relatives of a suicide *who* take it in ill part, etc." It would exist in an imaginary construction which ran counter to all the laws and facts of human psychology. There is, then, a quality of insight which is inseparable from the understanding of the sentence; which yet does not fluctuate with any shift in the weight of the evidence for its truth; and which is also distinguishable from the values characteristic of a good supposition. One is forced to assume that there must be a kind of understanding, not to be identified either with believing or with supposing, of which the criterion is the kind of feeling obtained in contemplation.

The example from Nietzsche was chosen precisely because it is

not devoid of cognitive value; for, though probably false, it suggests that *some* relatives do *sometimes* act in the way it describes; and this is not only true but it might well be connected with some very important truths in psychology. One may therefore be tempted to conceive of its value for imagination as being that of a suggestive half truth. And so with many great passages from the world's literature of exposition and argument. You may admit that in many cases they are demonstrably false; you may admit that they frequently contradict one another; but when you are asked how in that case they can one and all be accepted as valuable, you will be tempted to reply that they are contributions—that they *contain* or *suggest* valuable truths—and to conceive their authors as collaborating on the single structure of knowledge and wisdom. This argument, I repeat, is plausible because its premise is fairly sound. These writers—Montaigne, Milton, Pascal, Swift, Goethe, Emerson, and so many others—*were* great thinkers, great moralists, contributors to science and philosophy. But as an objection to the point that there exists a distinct dimension of esthetic meaning and an imaginative insight which corresponds to it, the argument is exposed to a crushing retort. This is simply that the greatest contribution to knowledge is in principle supersedable, whereas these passages are not to be superseded: they have a final and permanent value.

The idea that poetry as poetry is neither true nor false goes back at least to Sir Philip Sidney and perhaps to St. Thomas; and it is rather widely insisted upon today. Quite obviously, it enables us to avoid certain difficulties which arise for some critics, for instance, from the fact that Shakespeare made equally magnificent capital out of the affirmation and the denial of immortality. But it seems to lead in its own turn to consequences embarrassing to criticism. Thus, if a poem is not to be judged through an evaluation of its content, what remains but the form? We are led to the idea of an abstract poetic magic, a technical facility in the invention of rhythms or the management of vowels and consonants, which when superadded to an otherwise commonplace thought can render that thought poetical. And it is no wonder that such an interpretation of poetic value should seem to many people to be intolerably reductive. It is this dilemma which is posed for us by Professor Urban:

> Shelley, we are told, is not making a statement that must be accepted by the hearer as either true or false. The question of truth or falsity does not enter. Now . . . I may indeed "enjoy" these lines of Shelley merely for the music of his words, the beauty of his imagery. . . . If the hearer is enjoying the poet's utterances without any reference to their truth or falsity, he is not

enjoying the poet's meaning but something else. If, on the oher hand, he is really *understanding* the poet, that understanding does involve communication of meaning in which questions of truth and falsity are relevant.[4]

And it is this dilemma which is rejected by Mr. Cleanth Brooks when he says that the critic who refuses "to rank poems by their messages" is not thereby "compelled to rank them by their formal embellishments." [5]

Now I think we can see in what sense it is that a certain famous passage from *The Tempest* has the "same content" as the sentence, "Everything passes away," and in what sense it has a different content. If you will allow me to assume for the moment (what is certainly debatable) that both the passage—Prospero's speech—and its paraphrase have an empirical character, I would say that they are equivalent in the sense that they express the same reference or, if you prefer to consider it from the evidential standpoint, that any observation which confirmed or weakened the one would confirm or weaken the other. It is on this understanding of the word "content" that Shakespeare's passage figures as a platitude with esthetic frills and the "cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself" as so many ornamental flourishes; and it is for Mr. Urban to explain how two passages which have the same "content" should be so infinitely disparate in poetic value. In other words, it is just by ignoring the existence of a distinctively esthetic function of meaning, by assuming that the absence of a reference to reality would leave us with nothing but a sequence of meaningless sounds, that we are led inevitably to a formalistic interpretation of literary values. Before considering the alternative, we should disclaim any attempt to explain what we do not understand. Just as there is no theory of design from which we could deduce the fact that one bowl of flowers should be beautiful and another one worthless, so there is no theory of meaning which can explain why the exact combination of words in Prospero's speech should be uniquely valuable. But for our immediate purpose, which is the clarification of the word "content" as a critical concept, there is at least the point that the poem and its paraphrase are made up of entirely different words. The component meanings are not the same. This means that the same body of meanings is *not* present to the mind in the two cases; and perhaps it is not more mysterious that two sentences which express the same proposition to be proved or disproved should have different effects upon feeling than that two such different sentences should manage to express the same proposition. In the modest paraphrase,

[4] *Language and Reality*, p. 480.
[5] *The Well Wrought Urn*, p. 180.

"Even the solidest and apparently most enduring objects shall pass away," there already exist certain relationships among component meanings which are not to be found in the sentence, "All things shall pass away," from which it can be logically derived; and those relationships, which give to the one paraphrase some slight equivalence in point of emotionally appreciable content to Shakespeare's passage, constitute a difference between that passage and the other paraphrase. Thus the very features which are adventitious to the reference made by the passage are integral to its non-referential content.

Finally, I would like to suggest the bearing of my argument on another issue of some importance. To revert to our old example, let us suppose that in an upper corner of *The Gulf Stream* there was dimly sketched in a very small area a boat laden with women and children. It seems evident that our interest would focus mainly on the apathetic Negro in the foreground lying prone in the boat, rather than on them. It is his fate and not theirs which projects the romantic thrill, just as Achilles is more important to us than all his myrmidons and just as Macbeth, whether we are for him or against him, is more important to us than Lady Macduff and her children. In practical life it would be our business to correct the distorted evaluations which result from the nearness and prominence of certain objects; to give things the value and importance which they have in themselves; to be more concerned about the women and children than about the man in the boat; and not to bother about the conflicts in the soul of Macbeth when he is every day murdering innocent people. Plato's charge against the fine arts is that they impair the integrity of our intellects and wills, induce conflict and division in the human mind, by persuading us to judgments which are at variance with those of sober reason. Just as to cultivate the illusions of perspective without intellectual criticism is to remain rooted in the childish notion that a boat in the distance is smaller than one close at hand, so poetry and painting present the issues of life in a kind of moral perspective. Anyone not a fervent nationalist and imperialist who has felt himself deeply stirred by Heine's grenadier when he declares he will let his wife and child go begging for food while he follows the Emperor on his crazy and wicked adventures and has been troubled by the presence of an apparently treasonable element in his soul has implicitly registered Plato's whole problem. The critics of Plato from Aristotle down have been busy inventing queer kinds of truth to ascribe to the arts in order to defend them against Plato's charge. But Plato can not be refuted on his own ground. If factual or moral truth is the standard, some very great works will

have to be condemned. At the very least we shall be faced with the issue, explicitly underwritten by Plato's critics, whether to sacrifice the impartiality and catholicity of our taste or the integrity of our scientific and moral judgment. Yet Plato, when he assumes that the arts evoke responses *antagonistic* to those approved by reason, assumes that they evoke responses of essentially the *same kind,* leading ultimately toward practical decision; and it is at this point that his esthetic philosophy is vulnerable.

The reader of Heine's poem or of the passage in which Othello proclaims the "quality, pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war" has a limited number of choices. He can approve the sentiment, if he is enough of a militarist, and with it the poem. He can reject the sentiment and with it the poem. He can reject what he calls the "content" and acclaim the technical cunning which by manipulating sounds and metres knows how to make good poetry out of deplorable ideas. None of these choices fails to offend either against taste or against reason. Or he can ask himself, finally, what exactly he is committed to if he accepts the poetry, content and all. For what Heine, what Othello, is "saying" may bear a different construction from what a person "says" who expresses the evaluation—makes the claim—"War is glorious." That claim marks out a domain of morally relevant consequences: in other words, it is the whole phenomenon of war, with its glory, horror, advantage, and suffering weighed against one another, that we are presuming to judge. To base that judgment on a glimpse of one aspect is to be as irrational as Plato fears. But to *appreciate* that aspect is to be committed to no judgment whatever concerning the whole. In this mode of contemplative appreciation there is no ambivalence, no temptation, no rebellious impulse to be contended with. On the contrary, it is the doctrinaire moralist who, suppressing the honest deliverance of taste and feeling, leaves something out of his philosophy which is sooner or later to be reckoned with.

A thorough treatment of the esthetic function of language would have to concern itself with the didactic quality in literature where and when it appears, above all in those passages which take the explicit form of a moral judgment:

> It is better to be vile than vile esteemed
> Let not ambition mock their useful toil
> Neither a borrower nor a lender be

and so on. It would have to distinguish the non-referential meaning of such expressions from the moral reference or supposition or claim and this in turn from the acceptance or rejection of the

claim.[6] If these distinctions are accurately drawn, it becomes possible to show how we may critically "accept" apparently conflicting creeds without subscribing to anything which we do not believe. Instead of endorsing either the moralistic judgment of poetry or the critical dogma which would banish didacticism from poetry as extraneous, it would develop a conception of literature as moral experience based on the apprehension of "moral meaning." Thus the justification of a purely esthetic interpretation of the arts would be found in its ability to reconcile one with another all values which are recognized by intelligence, conscience, and taste.

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A PROOF THAT SYNTHETIC *A PRIORI* PROPOSITIONS EXIST

IN an article devoted to the philosophy of G. E. Moore, I advanced an argument in support of the view that there are propositions which are both synthetic and *a priori*.[1] This argument was, however, incomplete in a certain respect, and I wish to supply, in the second part of the present paper, a premise which serves to complete the argument given in that article. I wish also to present, in the first part of the present paper, what I take to be a rigorous proof that synthetic *a priori* propositions exist.

I

It will be necessary at the outset to state clearly what is to be meant when we say that a proposition is analytic; we can then define a proposition as synthetic if and only if it is not analytic.

[6] In this paper the term "non-referential," qualifying the term "meaning," is not identified with "emotive," "dynamic," or "expressive," and is not opposed to "factual," "indicative," "descriptive." We have seen how purely descriptive statements can be taken in such a way as to be appreciated for their meaning and make no reference to any state of affairs. On the other hand, moral propositions like those quoted above contain implicit references just in so far as the feelings which they express are (genetically) conditioned by or (normatively) based on opinions with respect to fact. For esthetics the emphasis in *emotive meaning* must be on *meaning* rather than on *emotive*, because the emotion which is inherent in the *understanding* of a piece of didactic writing is different from the moral attitude which it expresses or produces. The second is a feeling about how people should behave; the first is a feeling taken in the contemplation of a *view* about how people should behave. I can have the first without the second.

[1] See *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, pp. 321 ff., The Library of Living Philosophers, edited by P. A. Schilpp.

An analytic proposition is one that can be certified solely by reference to logical principles. Also, a proposition *P* may be said to imply a proposition *Q* analytically if and only if *Not-P or Q* is analytic. And what is meant here by the term "logical principles" can be made definite by saying that a proposition is analytic if and only if it can be established by the use of principles involved in the extended function calculus alone, where functions of any order may occur.

The terms "synthetic" and "analytic" are, of course, vague in their historical usage; but I believe that the senses here specified constitute a fair approximation to the senses in which these terms have been and are now employed. Whether this is so or not, however, the sense of the term "synthetic" here defined is the one in which I wish to maintain that some *a priori* propositions are synthetic.

In the article referred to above, I argued in particular that the proposition *Any cube has twelve edges* is both synthetic and *a priori*. This view was defended on the ground that the common notion of a cubical object, such as a die, a cube of sugar, or a cubical container, is a purely geometric idea, so that the property of having twelve edges can not be deduced by the use of logical principles alone from the property of being a cube. I argued further that, since most people do not know how many edges a cube has, and since a person can ascertain this number by finding an object which he recognizes as being cubical and then counting its edges, the notion of having twelve edges can be no part of the notion of being a cube, since, if it were, he would then not know what it was the edges of which he was counting. But the common notion of a cubical object is difficult to analyze, and it is desirable to deal with a conception which can be formulated more exactly.

Let us consider, then, the abstract definition of a cube within the context of a sufficient set of Euclidean postulates and without regard to any intuitive interpretation. We may suppose that the theorem *A cube has twelve edges* can be formally deduced from the postulates. And note that we say here advisedly that the theorem can be formally *deduced*, not that it can be formally *proved*. It would, of course, be meaningless to talk of proving a propositional function. But even with the usual interpretation of the Euclidean axioms the proposition that a cube has twelve edges can not be proved in the sense of being shown to be true analytically; all that we can show is that the proposition follows analytically from the postulates. I wish to say, then, that this proposition will be both synthetic and *a priori*. It will be synthetic because the property of having twelve edges can not be deduced

by the use of logical principles alone from the definition of a cube, and it will be *a priori* because we can show by an intuitive argument that any cube must necessarily have twelve edges.

We might, of course, so define a cube that this consequence would follow analytically. We might say, for example, that a cube was a regular solid with twelve edges and eight vertices, since that would uniquely determine a cube among the five classes of regular solids. But it is sufficient for our purposes that there should be at least one adequate definition from which this consequence does not follow. Thus we might say that a cube was a solid whose faces were squares, or a regular solid with eight vertices, or a regular solid with six faces. If all geometrical configurations could be so defined that their properties followed from their definitions with the aid of logical principles alone, then postulates could be dispensed with altogether, and, what is more, diverse geometries, with the same definitions but different postulates, would be impossible.

A question might be raised, finally, concerning what interpretation of the Euclidean postulates it is in which the theorems are themselves *a priori* propositions. This is not to be maintained with regard to an interpretation in terms of physical space, since that would be at best doubtful. It is clear, however, that these theorems become intuitively true when we interpret the postulates by reference to visual space; and that is the interpretation which we may here adopt. But it is to be emphasized that the proof given above does not require that all theorems of Euclidean geometry should become true *a priori* with an appropriate interpretation; it is sufficient that the property of being a cube should entail the property of having twelve edges. And anybody, who is not wholly confused, can see that this relation will be *a priori*.

II

When we are dealing with propositions other than mathematical ones, the method of proof employed in the foregoing argument is not available, and the evidence adduced will very likely be less convincing. We may consider a simple example, namely, *Anything that was red would necessarily be colored*, in order to illustrate the kind of argument to which we must apparently have recourse. I want to show that this proposition is both synthetic and *a priori*.

The first point that needs to be observed is this. In a formal argument, where the relations are all analytic, any extra-logical concept which occurs in the conclusion must occur also in the premises, with the following exceptions.[2] (1) A concept may oc-

[2] This is the premise which was not explicitly formulated in the article cited above.

cur in the conclusion which is a logical function of concepts occurring in the premises; and in order to avoid this exception we may suppose that definitions have been dispensed with altogether. (2) Since *P* implies *P or Q* and *P* implies *Q or not-Q*, no matter what propositions *P* and *Q* may be, new concepts can be introduced arbitrarily into a conclusion by the use of either of these principles. In point of fact, however, we never do this sort of thing in a serious argument, since the conclusion would be wholly uninformative; and we may safely omit reference to such a possibility, because the examples to be dealt with do not involve such a step. With this understanding, then, we may say that in a formal argument no new non-logical concepts, which are not present in the premises, will occur in the conclusion. That is why we can abstract altogether from the conceptual content of propositions in such an argument and rely entirely upon their logical form. And it follows that anyone who understands the premises of a formal argument, and who understands the grammar of the conclusion, can understand the conclusion wholly. If, therefore, we can show that at least one person might understand the premises of an argument, and also its grammar, without being able to understand its conclusion, we may infer that the relation of premises to conclusion is synthetic.

The second point concerns ostensive definition. An ostensively defined concept is one which we form by observing a variety of objects answering to the concept. Thus a child will learn the meaning of the word "chair" and will form the concept of a chair, or learn what a chair *is*, by observing what objects that term is applied to and what objects it is not applied to. After a sufficient number of observations of this sort, he will catch on and be able to proceed on his own initiative; and the notion of a chair will then have been ostensively defined for him. Again, let us take the concept of the number *four*, which is that of a quadruple. It will not be sufficient for a child to have a single instance, or a single kind of instance, of this concept in his experience. In order to make the necessary abstraction, he must have a variety of quadruples presented to him, such as the sides of a square, the legs of a dog, the wheels of an automobile, and the noises *one, two, three, four*. He must then compare these quadruples in respect of the fact that they *are* quadruples in order to arrive at the concept of the number four; otherwise he will not be able to form the class of quadruples and will not know what the number four *is*.

Now people are sometimes defective in color vision, as in the case of red-green blindness, or that of total color blindness. And although the state of affairs which we are going to assume is merely

supposititious, it is logically and conceptually possible, which is all that is required for our purposes. We may suppose a man to have monochromatic vision, and to be able to identify among colored objects red objects only. He will then see everything either as red or as some shade of grey, and he will be able to form the class of red things, in that he will be able to distinguish red objects from all other objects. But he will not have formed the concept of being colored, because that requires experiencing a variety of colors; and he will therefore be unable to understand the proposition *Anything that was red would necessarily be colored,* although he will understand well enough the antecedent of this proposition.

We may take, as a further example, the proposition *If anything is orange in color, then it is intermediate in color between red and yellow.* And we may suppose a person who has never seen anything that was either red or yellow, but has seen all his life things that were orange in color. Such a person will easily be able to understand the antecedent of this proposition; but he will not be able to understand its consequent, and that will not be due merely to a defect in vocabulary. If, however, the consequent could be derived by the use of formal logical principles from the antecedent, an understanding of the antecedent would make possible an understanding of the consequent. The proposition is therefore synthetic. And it is, of course, *a priori* as well.

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BOOK NOTE

A Philosophy of Mathematics. LOUIS O. KATTSOFF. Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State College Press. 1948. ix + 266 pp. $5.00.

This book offers a survey, presumably for beginning students, of recent contributions to the foundations of mathematics, and only incidentally (chiefly in the final chapter on "Mathematics and Reality") does it present any definite "philosophy of mathematics" such as the title promises. It is not a valuable performance on either score, and testifies more to Professor Kattsoff's extensive reading than to his powers of comprehension and careful exposition. The surveys contained in the book—it includes, in addition to statements of the more familiar logistic, formalist, and intuitionist standpoints, outlines of the views of Pasch, Chwistek, Church, and Mannoury—are in the main summaries(frequently in almost verbatim paraphrase) of publications in the field, but Dr. Kattsoff succeeds in being neither adequate, complete, nor accurate in his expositions.

A few specific indications of downright errors and other faults will sufficiently characterize the limitations of this volume. The distinction between the distributive and collective use of "all" is offered as "a clue" to the reasons for introducing Russell's theory of types, though the relevance of the distinction remains imperceptible. Only the simple theory of types is discussed; on the other hand, it is mistakenly asserted that the axiom of reducibility is needed if mathematics is to be reconstructed on the basis of that theory. Nothing intelligible is said of recent attempts to liberalize type-restrictions. The formalist approach is presented in terms of early publications by members of the school, and little or no use is made of the fuller and more explicit formulations by Bernays. The import for the formalist program of Goedel's famous theorem on the incompleteness of arithmetic is of course mentioned, but the work of Gentzen and the materials contained in the second volume of Hilbert-Bernays are not discussed. Dr. Kattsoff attempts to acquaint the reader with the proof of Goedel's theorem; but while he uses valuable space to reproduce the latter's long list of definitions which are preliminary to the main argument, he stops short of the actual demonstration and fails completely in giving the reader a clear idea of its essential features. The assertion is made that Goedel's result necessitates the adoption of a pluri-valued logic, and also that the proof of the incompleteness of arithmetic establishes the correctness of Brouwer's views. These are claims which would be important if true; as it is, however, the first rests on a confusion of truth with decidability, and the second upon a loose reading of both the formalist and intuitionist theses. Brouwer's views are explained only in a sketchy fashion, even though Heyting's formalization of the finitist logic is given in full and Brouwer's difficult reconstruction of the theory of aggregates is reproduced in close paraphrase—without, however, any helpful comments or other indications concerning the connection between Brouwer's theory and other work in the field. The French literature of intuitionism is neglected entirely. In his exposition of Frege's ideas Dr. Kattsoff succeeds in identifying the notions of concept, class, and predicate, in spite of the fact that some of Frege's most biting irony was directed against such a confusion. Elsewhere again, Dr. Kattsoff is careless enough to suggest that an expression *containing* a variable is itself a variable; and he also manages to confound variables with constants by identifying the *range* of values that a variable can take with the value that *satisfies* statement-forms containing that variable. The explanation of what is meant by "completeness" of an axiom set is confusing if not actually meaningless, and the definition of "isomorphism" is just irresponsible. And so on, and so on.

Dr. Kattsoff believes that mathematics is not a creation of the mind but the discovery of relations between phenomenal things; and he criticizes positivists for holding that the "tautologous" propositions of mathematics "say nothing about the world." Yet in the statement of his own position as well as in his criticism of other views he is less than cogent. He maintains that there is no "real distinction" between pure and applied mathematics, and asserts (without even a semblance of explaining his meaning) that the "analytic" or "tautologous" character of mathematics "indicates a corresponding analytic character in reality." Accordingly, it is not clear whether, and if so how, he distinguishes between statements which, though employing mathematical ideas, are not assertible on logical grounds alone (e.g., Maxwell's equations), and statements which are (e.g., the prime factorization theorem); and his criticism of the positivists, for example, seems to rest on the mistaken supposal that it is the former kind of statements as well as the latter which they regard as supplying no information about the actual world. Dr. Kattsoff's "philosophy of mathematics" appears to be an undifferentiated mixture of formal, empirical, psychological, and sociological dicta, compounded without distinguishing between them seemingly as a matter of principle. For he brings his book to a close with the remarkable declaration that "To confuse or to isolate syntactical, pragmatic, and semantic problems in mathematics always leads either to confusion or to abstraction."

E. N.

CURRENT JOURNALS

JOURNAL OF SYMBOLIC LOGIC. Volume 13, Number 4. Axiom schemes for m-valued functional calculi of first order. Part I: Definition of axiom schemes and proof of plausibility: *J. B. Rosser* and *A. R. Turquette*. Matrix development of the calculus of relations: *I. M. Copilowish*. Proofs of non-deducibility in intuitionistic functional calculus: *Andrzej Mostowski*.

PHILOSOPHY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH. Vol. IX, No. 2. Sartre's Theory of the Alter Ego: *Alfred Schuetz*. Outline of a Philosophy of Existence: *Nicola Abbagnano*. Recommendations regarding the Language of Introspection: *J. N. Findlay*. Phenomenalism and J. S. Mill's Theory of Causation: *Robert McRae*. The Nature of Philosophical Problems: *J. E. Ledden*. Logical Nonsense: *Arthur Pap*. Discussions—Comment on Mr. Pegis's Rejoinder: *A. O. Lovejoy*. Postscript: *A. C. Pegis*. Rudolf Carnap's Analysis of "Truth": *Felix Kaufmann*. Reply to Felix Kaufmann: *Rudolf Carnap*. On the Church-Frege Solution of the

Paradox of Analysis: *M. G. White.* A Phenomenological Critique of Psychology: *R. F. Creegan.* Experience and Existence in Dewey's Naturalistic Metaphysics: *S. J. Kahn.* Professor Weiss, *Existenz* and Hegel: *J. E. Smith.*

BULLETIN DE LA SOCIÉTÉ FRANÇAISE DE PHILOSOPHIE. 41e Année, No. 4. Le primat de la perception et ses conséquences philosophiques: *Maurice Merleau-Ponty.* Discussion.

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR PHILOSOPHISCHE FORSCHUNG. Band III, Heft 1. Zur Lehre von den Kontrapositionsschlüssen: *Ulrich Klug.* Die Begründung der Wahrscheinlichkeit und das Anwendungsproblem des Apriorischen: *Walter Del Negro.* Des Mechanismus-Vitalismus-Problem vom Standpunkt der kritischen Ontologie Nicolai Hartmanns: *Max Hartmann.* Ontologie der Freiheit: *Aloys Wenzl.* Erkenntnis und Glaube: *Joseph Münzbuber.* Die "Goldene Regel": *Hans Reiner.*

ALFEMEEN NEDERLANDS TIJDSCHRIFT VOOR WIJSBEGEERTE EN PSYCHOLOGIE. 40e jaargang, aflevering 5. Hoe is filosofie mogelijk? *H. J. Pos.* De wijsbegeerte van Mathieu Schoenmaekars: *B. D. Van Verschuer.* Spanning en ontspanning als psychologische begrippen: *B. Stokvis* en *A. Sondheim.* Laatste mededelingen over het Xde Internationale Congres. (41e jaargang, aflevering 1) Openingsrede bij het Tiende Internationale Congres v. Wijsbegeerte: *H. J. Pos.* Mededelingen naar aanleiding van het Congres. De exact-wetenschappelijke wijsbegeerte op het Congres van Amsterdam: *E. W. Beth.* De sectie filosofie van de geschiedenis en van de cultuur op het Congres te Amsterdam: *K. Kuypers.* Bartholomeus de Ligt 1883–1938: *G. A. v. d. Bergh v. Eysinga.* Over de problematiek van de wijsbegeerte der wiskunde van thomistisch standpunt: *B. G. Wiggers.*

We list below selected articles from the following publications:

THE PERSONALIST. Volume 30, No. 1. The Role of Philosophy in World Understanding: *R. T. Flewelling.* Conscience as a Function of Location: *T. V. Smith.* The Idealism of Bowne: *Luis Farré.* Personalistic Definitions: *J. S. Moore.*

AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY. Vol. XXVI, No. 2. Adam Gib and the Philosophers: *A. N. Prior.* Logic and History: *G. Buchdahl.*

THE HUMANIST. Summer, 1948. Existentialism is not Humanism: *H. A. Larrabee.* Pluralism, Chance and Freedom: *Corliss Lamont.*

SCIENTIA. Vol. LXXXIII, N. CDXXXIII–XXXIV. Parmenide, Platone, la scienza moderna e il problema dell'intelligibilità dell'esperienza: *A. Levi.*

THE HIBBERT JOURNAL. Vol. XLVI, No. 4. Richard Baxter and the Problem of Certainty: *Margaret L. Wiley.* (Vol. XLVII, No. 1) Revelation and Reason: *H. D. Lewis.*

JOURNAL DE PSYCHOLOGIE. 41e Année, No. 2. Le risible et le comique: *Et. Souriau.* Remarques sur le regard: *P. M. Schuhl.* Réalité physique et expression linguistique: *F. Mikus.* Valeurs sémantiques et valeurs grammaticales: *G. Galichet.* (No. 3) Les origines de la notion de mâyâ dans la spéculation indienne: *L. Renou.* Note sur l'histoire du mot "personne": *A. Bayet.* A propos de l'analyse de soi: *E. Minkowski.*

NOTES AND NEWS

The officers for the year 1949 of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Division are as follows: President, Walter T. Stace; Vice-President, John Wild; Secretary-Treasurer, Milton C. Nahm; Members of the Executive Committee: Sidney Hook, Fulton H. Anderson, Lewis White Beck, and Henry S. Leonard. The meeting next December will be held at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts.

The officers for the year 1949 of the Pacific Division of the American Philosophical Division are as follows: President, Paul Marhenke; Vice-President, John R. Reid; Secretary-Treasurer, Herbert L. Searles; Members of the Executive Committee: D. A. Piatt, James L. Jarrett, Jr., David Rynin, and Barnett Savery.

A Philosophy of Science Group was formally constituted and affiliated with the British Society for the History of Science at a meeting held at University College, London, in June, 1948. The Group will hold meetings for the reading and discussion of papers and will publish an account of its activities in a supplement to the *Bulletin of the British Society for the History of Science* (circulated to members). "The purpose of the Group is to study the logic and method of science as well as of the various special sciences, including the social sciences. The main emphasis is upon an approach through the various special sciences to the philosophy of Science." Membership is open to all persons who have been proposed by two members, approved by the Committee and elected at an ordinary meeting. The Committee is as follows: H. Dingle (chairman), K. R. Popper, F. I. G. Rawlins, G. J. Whitrow, and A. C. Crombie (Honorary Secretary), Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University College, Gower Street, London, W. C. 1.